The Only Way Knowing

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Summary: I'm going to die soon. Is the first thing that came to Robin's mind once Origin Peak was in sight. A compilation of what Robin feels and thinks throughout Awakening. MAJOR ENDGAME SPOILERS. Rated T for blood, language, and suggestive themes.

Chapter 1: Chapter 1: Stargazers

I'm going to die soon. Is the first thing that came to Robin's mind once Origin Peak was in sight. However they still have a few days until they arrive. He recalled what Naga said to him before their departure from Mount Prism, she spoke to him in private, which he was sure the others would feel honored. He felt no honor, however, he did –after all- have the Fell Dragon's heart.

"You have power similar to mine." Said the soft voice of Naga.
He sighs and nods, "I'm aware."
"Grima," she starts, he cringes when she calls him that, "you have a choice."
"It would be best for this world if he- I was defeated for good. I'm prepared for that sacrifice."
"What of your friends?" She glances to them.
He pauses to think, "they can move on."
"I will have to tell Chrom of both choices once you are at Origin Peak."
"I understand," it pains him, leaving everyone he loves, everyone he cares about. The tactician stands in silence, thinking on what she had said.
"You must go now, if you wish to reach Origin Peak as quickly as possible."
Nodding, he exists the temple. Chrom asks him what Naga had to say to him, he ends up smiling an empty smile and shrugging it off.

Robin had arranged a date with Lucina that night. It would be best if she knew his plan. She was more level headed than her father and didn't make too many rash decisions. He had decided that they would go stargazing. After battles he would often see her stargaze alone, so he had thought that maybe she would like company this one last time. She agreed happily, naïve as to what burdened his mind. He smiled and told her that he loved her, as if it were perhaps the last time saying it. Before the date, though, he had written up his will, he didn't have much physical objects other than a few books and tomes. Those he would leave to his daughter that had arrived from the future. He had a few cheap items from villages they passed through, he stated that anyone can take anything. And he apologized, for leaving them all so soon. He put it in a letter and hid it in one of his bags.

The darkness of night came around swiftly, it was a new moon and everything was dark. Perfect for stargazing. He and Lucina were side by side, looking up at the heavens as the stars dazzled and danced.
"See that star?" Robin said pointing up. Lucina followed his hand and looked at the star, as far as she could tell it was the one that shined the brightest.
"The bright one?"
"Yeah. I noticed a while back that that star is always there, and always North. I told Chrom and he said, *by the gods the star is following us*!"
Lucina laughed at that, and Robin laughed with her. But his laugh died out sooner than hers. *Tell her tell her tell her*, his mind screamed at him.
She looked to him in concern, "something has been on your mind lately, are you okay?"
He gave her a half-hearted smile, "of course! This whole Grima ordeal is making me weary is all."
They both sat in silence, looking at each other under the stars. Robin sighed in defeat, "no, that's not true. I've been thinking about what Naga said."
"What may that be?"
"If I were to kill Grima myself, he would be gone forever. We are one in the same and the only power that can destroy him is himself."
"Robin, where are you going with this?"
"Well I'm going to do it. I'm going to kill him… But that would also mean I would cease to exist, so I've deducted."
"You will do no such thing! What about my father? Or Morgan? Or me? We all care for you deeply." She yelled at him, and he listened. She was right, it would leave such a big impact on them. And perhaps not for the better.
"What's one life to millions? Lucina, you've seen what Grima has done –can do. I can't allow that to happen in any future, whether it's in ten years or thousands. We have one opportunity to destroy Grima once and for all, and I'm prepared to take it. I know… I know it will hurt…" He dared not look her in the eyes for fear of seeing her cry, when he himself was the one crying. Robin is crying and he doesn't even realize it.
"Robin…" Lucina started, then paused, she had never seen or heard him cry. He had always seemed distant, or wanting to be left alone when sad. "Robin, I can't change your mind about this. Since you had promised me you would support me no matter what path, I shall do the same…" She took another pause, " however, what of Morgan?"
He sniffed and looks to her once more, "she'll be fine…"
"No, I mean…" She sighed and closed her eyes for a while, then grabbed his hand. "I mean our Morgan, the one that is

yet to exist." Gently, he pulled her hand up to his face and silently sobbed. He didn't know, all his tactics thrown out the window. They weren't any use to him in this situation.
He opened his mouth in response, his words were shaky and unstable, "Lucina… Promise me, promise me you'll find someone else to care for you when I'm gone. Promise me you'll find someone who loves you more than I ever could."
"No." She said simply, and harshly.
"… What?"
"I said I won't promise you such an idiotic request. No one could ever love me the way you do, and I could never love them as much as I do you. You said that if you were killed you would find some way back, now keep your word, sir. Don't give up now. You're our tactician, if you give up then we all do… And you're my husband, I need you…"
"Lucina…" He said quietly, looking down as more tears started to fall from his eyes. Lucina used her free hand to wipe his tears from his face, he looked back up to her as she smiled at him softly, "I trust you, Robin… And I support your decision."
After moments of silence he leaned on her shoulder.
It was a half hour of them just sitting there, Lucina holding on to him, and him leaning on her. "Lucina." Robin said after the half hour mark.
"Yes?" She replied.
"Thank you. For everything." He finished.
She was silent, this is his way of saying goodbye, isn't it? "You're welcome." She finally mustered.
He then told her, that perhaps it would be best if they ensured Morgan's existence, and she agreed. Robin wouldn't admit it, but he couldn't bare the thought of leaving her alone to raise Morgan. He trusts her though, and Chrom. He trusts them both.

Robin had woken up early the next morning, despite barely getting any sleep. He was used to it though. Lucina was still asleep, exhausted from the night before; Chrom would kill him himself if he had known what he they had done… That is if he wasn't going to die first. Sighing, he got up and put on his clothes, before putting his gloves on he looked at the mark on his right hand. He despised that mark ever since he found out what it truly meant. He also despised his other markings on his back and shoulders, but at least those weren't a constant reminder as the one on his hand. He wasn't able to see those ones. He looked away from it and slipped on his gloves.
It was nearly five in the morning he could tell once he stepped out of the tent. The air was cold and the sky was darker than usual, in about an hour or two Chrom would wake up, then Lucina, followed by the rest of the army. Morgan normally got up around the same time as him, they would meet and make breakfast for themselves. However, the camp was silent. He couldn't blame them, the previous day was exhausting, as will be the next. He dreads the oncoming day of when they reach Origin Peak, which by what he could deduce would be in two days. That is if they withheld the speed they've been holding up for the past few days.
He sat and ate alone, his mind kept wandering to what will happen when he dies. *What will it feel like? Is there an afterlife? Where do deceased souls go?* Were thoughts that ran through his mind.
"Battling with some unpleasant thoughts?" Came a familiar voice.
"Chrom? What are you doing up this early?" Robin was surprised, he was never up that early.
"Same reason you are. I cannot sleep when we're about to fight a giant dragon that reeks destruction upon the world." He joked, it only made Robin cringe.
"Don't remind me." Is what he said, but what Chrom understood was "we're fighting me."
"Robin, we can seal this dastard away. Then we won't have to worry." His friend assured as he put his hand on his shoulder.
Robin set down his fork, realizing that he wasn't hungry, "I know there's nothing to worry about, we'll defeat him, I'm sure of that much." He wasn't lying, they were going to defeat him.
Chrom smiled, "there's the optimistic Robin we know. Now how was your date with Lucina?"
The last question caught him by surprise and caused him to become flustered. He didn't think of the possibility of Chrom spying on them, he could already know about his plan. Robin's train of thought was interrupted by Chrom, "that well huh? Heh, if I didn't know any better I would think it went to well."
"Er… Yes… Right. Ha ha… Ha?" He lied. It didn't go as well as he had wished. He was a sobbing mess, how could he have let himself loose control of his emotions? He normally had those in check. After a moment of silence, Robin spoke up once more, "Chrom?"
"Yes?" He replied.
"Thank you. For everything."
Chrom smiled, "you're welcome. I enjoy having the honor of being your friend."
"No. I mean it. Thank you, so much."
"Then… I thank you as well."
After some chatting Chrom exited the mess hall, he said it would be best if he woke everyone up earlier so they could get to Mount Prism faster. Once the others started gathering in the mess to eat, Robin started to clean up his area so he could leave. His plan was flawed though, as others stopped him in his tracks so they could talk to him. They all seemed

nervous of the upcoming battle. Things were said multiple times such as, "hey-o Robin! Crazy that we're going against Grima himself, isn't it!" Or, "I wouldn't have thought we would go against the Fell Dragon when first joining the Shepherds."
He nodded in agreement to all the things they had said, but his mind was elsewhere so he didn't really hear what they had said. Once he was able to escape the mess he sighed and looked back. Shaking his head, he turned around and went back in. "Shepherds!" He announced. They all turned to look at him, "thank you. For everything."
Some of them would say you're welcome in response, others nodded, and others smiled or laughed. With that, he slipped out of the room to go check the convoy. See if their weapons and armor were in peak condition. That would normally distract him of his thoughts. While checking the supplies he had made side notes to what his strategy might be. No matter what he was doing though, his thoughts kept drifting back to what he will do.

It was approximately one hour later when they had started packing up for the march. And it was also then that he was approached by Laurent.
"Can I help you, Laurent?" He questioned as he put a box into one of the wagons.
"No, not me. I'm just a messenger, Lucina has been looking for you." He replied.
"I see… Alright, where is she?" He heaved another box up and onto the wagon.
"At your tent, I believe." Robin could see the slight suspicion in Laurent's eyes, he had every right to be. He was one of her friends, and the one most likely to scrutinize people aside from Miriel.
"Thank you, Laurent." He nodded in response and walked away to gather his stuff.
Robin had stacked up one more box before leaving to go find Lucina. Once he had spotted her he walked over to her. Lucina looked over to him and immediately hugged him.
"Lucina?" She was holding on to him for dear life, not saying anything in response. Robin had hugged her back.
"Don't you dare say goodbye," she finally said, burying her face into his shoulder.
He was silent, then nodded, "I won't. I promise I won't."

Chapter 2: Chapter 2: But Of Course It Was

It was raining that day. The heavy hearts of soldiers dragged on. They were returning home from the Valm War. Soldiers were lost. As well as friends
He blamed himself for the loss of both Donnel and Brady. He tried so hard to keep casualties to a zero.

"*Brady! Go heal your father!" Robin yells to Brady as his sword clashes with another's. Brady nods, "a'right! Don't. Worry pa I'm comin'!"*

That was the last thing he ever heard Brady say. Once the battle was done and complete, Robin noticed that Brady and Donnel did not return to celebrate.

"*Has anyone seen Donnel and Brady?" Robin says to the remaining few who weren't brought to the infirmary. The battlefield is scattered with dead bodies, maybe some wounded gravely.*
He sorts out a search party consisting of Say'ri, Lucina, Maribelle, and a few soldiers from the Chon'sin Dynasty. And so starts the search, they call out names and a few wounded are found from the both the opposing army and theirs. Those from the opposing armies were spared, many of them had families and were forced to fight for Walhart.
Robin hears a shriek come from Maribelle, he looks to see what was the matter and sees a broken catharsis. He turns away when he sees Donnel's body, he has multiple stab wounds and several arrows and a spear imbedded into his body… He used himself as a human shield for Brady. And even then it didn't matter, Brady was defenseless. Maribelle starts to sob openly, and Lucina just stares on. "There are no guaranties in war." Is what she's telling herself to try and make herself feel better. Now this world's Brady will grow up without a pa.

He blamed himself, Chrom had reassured him that there was nothing he could have done. He was the one who sent them to their deaths though. He shouldn't have sent them on that path. They should have stayed in a group. What will he tell Donnel's mother? He promised her he would be returned home safe and sound.
He can't even tell her that.
"It's not your fault," Lucina tried to assure him.
"But of course," Robin started, bitterly, "it was."

From there they split off with Say'ri so she could rebuild Chon'sin. Both Virion and Olivia had also split off together for Rosanne. Inigo had planned to go with them, but decided that the army would need his strength. He had said he didn't belong in their life anyway. Frederick and a select few had separated so he could search for the gemstones. That only left a few of the original Shepherds and their children left.

"*What does victory mean if there were so many lives that had been the cost?" Robin asks Lucina as they ride on to Ylisse. She doesn't reply, not knowing the answer.*

They were all tired when they saw the green pastures and mountains of Ylisse. Even then, they couldn't rest. Chrom had affairs to deal with, and papers to sign. Robin, was stuck drawing up plans for if and when they go against Grima, the threat loomed ever closer each passing day.

Everyone started to worry about Robin when he started to stay up all night, every night since their return. He claimed he didn't need sleep, and that he had to finish up work anyways. Chrom urged his friend to take a break, but he refused. The real reason that he wouldn't admit to why he wouldn't sleep was because he couldn't. He would replay the events over in his head, he could have saved both Brady and Donnel. He could have. He could have gods dammit.

"*Donny's comin' home!" Donnel's mother shouts out in joy when she sees Ylissian flags in the horizon. "Oh my sweet boy is returning home!" Soon the Shepherds had arrived in the small village.*
"Where's my boy?" She cries out when she doesn't see him amongst the other Shepherds. Robin steps forward, handing her a piece of fabric with items inside. "I'm so sorry," his voice quivered, "I couldn't… I couldn't keep him safe… I'm the Tactician I should have-!" His voice cracks and fades, tears start to stream down his face.
Donnel's mother unfolds the cloth, revealing a pot and a bloodied bronze spear. She wailed and fell to her knees. "Not my baby boy. No! You promised!"

"Robin. You need to sleep," Lucina urged, his eyes were heavy with deprivation of both sleep and joy.
"I'm fine." He muttered, nearly falling over. Lucina caught him and held on, he tried to stand but ended up falling.
"You're exhausted. You need to stop putting yourself through this, it's not healthy." Ironic, how those years ago when the Valm war had started Robin told her not to put so much stress on herself. Now she's the one in the position he was in.
"Mmhhn, can't… work to finish…" He had been done with his work for days. Had he stayed there any longer he would've dozed off, but he forced himself up.
"Sleep is more important than that right now." Lucina helped him get to their bed, "now *sleep*."
"nn… can't allow that…" He murmured as he fell asleep. She sighed in relief, finally. And she left him to his sleep.

Robin had actually slept through two whole days, which would be concerning if not for his previous days of avoiding said sleep. When he had awoken he felt renewed, optimistic of the days to come, certain of victory over the day. Rushing out of bed, he cleaned himself and got dressed. As he passed through the halls of the Ylisstol castle he was greeted by Chrom.
"You certainly look better!" He commented.
"It's a new day! What can I say?" He exclaimed with a smile.
"Walk with me," Chrom started to walk, and Robin walked beside him. "I got word from Frederick that he has news for us and that we should prepare at the barracks."
"I see, what of the plan?"
"It's coming along smoothly from what I gather. However since you've been asleep for two days-" His sentence was cut off abruptly by Robin.
"I was asleep for two days? Ah, gods, I'm so sorry Chrom, please forgive me."
"At ease, Robin. You deserved it after such a long campaign." With that response, he sighed in relief. Robin then heard someone call for him, they both turned to look behind them, "father! Father!" It was Morgan.
He grinned, "hello Morgan, what do you need?" Instead of a reply, she just hugged him. "What's wrong?"
"Oh nothing! I'm just glad you're finally awake! Now you can tell me that story you promised me! And since grandfather," Chrom cringed at that, still not used to the whole grandfather business, "is here he can help! We can do family bonding!" She grinned, with a sparkle in her eyes that were similar to Lucina's when she was excited.
"Ah, sorry Morgan, family bonding will have wait, we have to go to the barracks soon to meet up with Frederick."
She let go of her father and frowned in disappointment, "aww. Okay." And with that she skipped off.
Chrom looked to Robin, "where does she get all that energy?"
Robin shrugged in response, "I have no idea…" He then chuckled silently.
"What? What's so funny?"
"Grandpa." The tactician laughed, with a devious look on his face.
"Stop it. It's weird enough as it is that you're my son in law."
He froze in his tracks, then nodded in agreement. "...You have a very valid point there."

They eventually split off, as Robin was dragged off by Morgan despite him telling her that he was busy. Now he would be stuck telling stories for another hour or so, at least that's what he thought.
"Father," his daughter's face contorted into a pained and confused look that did not suit her well.
He looked to Morgan in concern, "what's wrong?"
"I've been getting a lot of headaches recently. And cousin Owain said something that can be right but I just shrugged it off as hunger…"
"Morgan…" He said softly, looking her in the eyes.
"He suggested that the reason I have no memories is because someone locked them away. But that can't be, right?"
Robin was silent, thinking about who and why.
"Father?" Her eyes started to well up.
"Perhaps… someone did lock your memories away, for reasons beyond what I can imagine." He finally said.
"But why? Did I do something wrong before I came here? Did they want me to forget because they didn't want me in pain? What if I-!" She cut herself off with a hiccup and some tears.
Robin hugged his daughter, "shh, don't cry. We'll find out together… Is this what's been bothering you?"
She nodded, followed by another hiccup.
"We will find out how and why you don't have any previous memories, don't you worry. I am known to work supposed miracles."
"Thanks, father," she whispered.

Finally, Robin was able to get to the barracks, only to find Chrom staring at a wall. His brows were focused in deep concentration, and his posture was tense. "Uh oh, I know that look. Battling with some unpleasant thoughts?" Chrom turned to look at his friend.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: A Miscalculation

"**DAMN HER!**" A voice roared out. It echoed through the chambers and halls of the Fell Dragon's self pronounced throne room. "**That blasted dragon! I had that pest in my jaws.**" The cloaked figure stood from his throne and looked up at the Fire Emblem that had a dark glow around it. A smile played at the man's lips, it wasn't a sincere smile, no it was one of dark thoughts and schemes. Soon the hooded figure disappeared in thin air.

"M-Mster Grima?" A dark mage stuttered as the dark figure appeared elsewhere.
"**Prepare some Risen, I am going after the pity little resistance.**"
"Yes Master Grima," the mage hurriedly ran to do as his master commanded.

"**No no *no*! I will not allow you to escape!**" The Fell Dragon screamed as he watched humans run through the gates of time. He started to chase after, "**if that filthy blooded girl wishes to change the past. Then I shall take the lead and start the ritual sooner.**" When the Dragon reached the other side he found himself near a road, and there he saw a caravan approach. Taking a step back off the road, he watched as it rolled by. The Fell Dragon then felt a pang of familiarity. **Ah,** he thought, **it appears my vessel remembers this day.**

"Ho!" One of the drivers called out as the horses and wagon came to a stop. "Stranger! What brings you out here alone?"
Grima paused and spoke out in his vessel's voice, "I'm a traveler looking for a family member! My brother, I believe his name is Robin."
The man smiled, "well looks like you're in luck! He and his mother are in the back. Tell you what, they say. It to be disturbed until we reach the next town, so why don't you ride with me?" He patted the seat beside him.
"I would be honored, though I'm disappointed I won't be able to see my brother until the next town." He said as he climbed up beside the man, **filthy humans**.
"Hyah!" He cried out as the caravan started to move again, "say, what's your name?"
"That is none of your concern," he hissed.
"Easy there, just curious."

Once they arrived in the village the caravan stopped, Grima swiftly left the man's side and started to search for his past vessel.
"Robin's brother! Hold!" The man called out. He must daft if he thinks we are acquaintances. The hooded one thought to himself before turning to look at him. "Yes?"
The man caught up to him, "I'm the caravan's leader, I need to make sure they aren't spotted when they're let out."
Ah yes. We were being smuggled over from Plegia. "Why?"
He didn't say anything in response, as they approached the back wagon, the caravan's leader pulled out a key and unlocked the door. "Robin, Morgana, you can come out." He whispered. Two figures emerged from the darkness of the cabin. "Thank you so much, Mordeci, how can we ever repay you?" Questioned the woman.
"No need for that, it was my pleasure," said Mordeci.
The other one who emerged had dark hair and brown eyes, he seemed cold and calculating. Distant from the rest of the world.
"A man claims to be your brother, Robin."
Robin furrowed his brows, "surely you jest, I do not have a brother."
"I thought so too. But he has a cloak similar to yours and everything."
Robin's mother cried out, "oh dear gods! How did they find us? Robin, quickly! Run! Don't grab anything just run!"
"**Sadly that won't do you any good,**" came a voice from beside them. Grima was leaning against the caravan, looking on in amusement.
Mordeci drew his sword and pointed it at him. "You two go, I'll hold him off." The two nodded and ran.
"**How pitiful really. My vessel used to like you. You were supposed to go on, live your life, have children, and then die protecting said family. What a shame that won't happen now,**" he started to laugh.
"I don't know what kind of cruel dastard you are, but you aren't going to set a hand on either of them. As a proud civilian of Ylisse it is my duty to protect people who need it."
"**How are you going to protect yourself?**"
"What do you-" he was cut off when a blur charged forward and thrust a dark spike into his stomach.
"**And here I thought I wouldn't have to bloody my hands.**"
"You… Sick…. Bastard…" Mordeci coughed out. It was all in vain though, as Grima dissipated the spike leaving an open wound.
"**I don't have time to chat, things to do, fell dragons to resurrect.**" And with that, he left.

They ran, oh they ran. They always ran, but it meaningless now, the hooded man teleported in front of them.

"Please no! Don't take Robin!" His mother cried out.
"**Silence traitor!**" He yelled.
Morgana pulled a knife from a shoe and moved to throw it at him, he blocked it with his hand as it pierced through it. He sighed in disappointment, "w-what are you?" She looked on in disbelief as he pulled it from his hand and it started to heal itself.
"**Oh now you've made me cross.**" He pulled out a bronze sword and thrust it forward.
"Mother!" Robin cried out in horror as Grima removed his blade from her. The young boy rushed to catch her.
"**Oopsies. Seems like she's about to expire. If you don't join me as one, you might not be able to save her. A shame really. You must love her dearly.**"
Morgana whispered something to Robin, then he looked to Grima, grief stricken, "shut up you heartless monster!"
"**Join me now, and you can save her.**" Grima urged.
"I said *shut up*!"
The Fell Dragon sighed, "I suppose I will have to take matters into my own hands. You will join me." He reached out his arms and murmured chants under his breath, darkness encircled both him and Robin. Grima then reached inside his chest and pulled out a blackened heart.
Robin stared in horror, "no! Let me go! I don't want to be Grima!"
"Ah ah ah," he tisked, then took a step forward, Robin took one step back. "You shall accept my heart and we will be twice as strong."
"*Never*!"

It was a blur as to what happened, but Robin found he was back in reality somehow. His mother had told him to run, find the prince of Ylisse, warn him of what is to come. So he ran, memories rushing in and out of his head, it throbbed and ached but he kept running. His hair had started to turn from raven to white, the stress was far too great. Find Chrom. Warn him. Eventually he succumbed to the pain and toppled over, falling unconscious.

Chrom is running besides Robin as he strikes an unknown figure. The hooded male starts to charge up Thoron to strike the unsuspecting man, but he teleports above and fires at Chrom. Just in time Robin shot at the oncoming blast and it creates a shock of smoke. Valid argument rises from the ground and looks Robin in the eyes.
"This is it, our final battle," says the Ylissean ruler as he rises from the ground, next to Robin "You're one of us, Robin, and no destiny can change that."
Robin nods in agreement, preparing Thoron and his silver sword. "I'm ready."
Chrom moves forward and Robin moves with him. Chrom jumps forward and lands his sword where Validar is. Validar, however moves out of the way, "fools! This is all written!" Robin then fires Thoron immediately after that was said, it struck him in the abdomen causing him to fall backwards.
"Now Chrom!" Chrom nods and lunges forward, brilliant light surrounds him as he stabs Validar. "Even…. This was…. Written…" He manages before Chrom pulls his sword out. Validar falls to the ground. Chrom looks to Robin with a smile on his face. However what he doesn't see is Validar getting up.

"*Nng, this isn't over!" He yells, exerting a giant ball of purple energy at Chrom, "*DAMN YOU **BOTH**!*" Robin's eyes widen and he quickly pushes Chrom out of the way, only to get hit himself. Chrom quickly rushes to his side, "are you okay?" The grandmaster looks to where Validar was to see his body turn into hazy purple smoke. Chrom starts to help him up, "that's the last we'll see of him. Thanks to you we carried the day." Robin suddenly gripps his head as his vision starts to redden.*
"Hey! What's wrong?" He felt his right hand searing in pain as he looks over to his friend, "are you o-" his sentence stops abruptly when he sees his friend's face contort into one of distress. He chokes out a painful breath as Robin steps away and sees a bolt stabbed in his chest. He looks on in horror, then at his hand. What have I done?
"This isn't… Your fault." Chrom manages to say, as he looks back to him.
"Promise me… You'll get out of here." And with that, he topples over, dead. Robin screams in agony only to find that he isn't screaming, but laughing.

"**Blast, I should have known his heart was not yet ready. How could I make such a miscalculation?**" The fell dragon cursed, he pulled at his hair until some came out. White. He roared out in anger. How *dare* it be white? White is the opposite of the darkness, he cringed at the disgustingness of himself, no, his vessel. How *dare* his vessel be born into the world of humans. How *dare* it change. "**No, I must not linger on this. I must get time back on its original course. I must return to Plegia at once.**"

"Come on! I wanna get back to Ylisstol as soon as possible!" Lissa called out as she started to run ahead.
"Milady please slow down, you may," Frederick the Wary was cut off when he heard a faint *oof*, "…trip," he finished.

Chrom snickered, then caught up to his sister with Frederick following behind warning him that he could also fall.
"Owww, what did I trip over?" Lissa rubbed her head as she stood up. Looking down, she screeched, "a body! *A dead body*! Oh my gods I tripped over a body!"
Now worried, Chrom approached faster, then looked at the supposed "body". He saw the rise and fall of the man's chest, "he's not dead."
"Milord, please stand back, he could be a brigand."
Lissa lightly poked the man with the end of her staff, "I think he's unconscious."
"See? Nothing to worry about Frederick, he can't do any good in that state."
"I still must advise caution." He replied curtly.
"Chrom, we have to do something." Lissa said.
"What do you propose we do?" Chrom asked her.
"I… Don't know." She replied looking to her brother. The man started to stir, his eyes slowly opened and then winced a bit at the brightness of the sun. Chrom blocked it out though, when they both leaned down to see if he was okay, "I see you're awake now." The man looked up at the two.
"Hey there," the man then looked over to Lissa as she gave him a friendly smile, then nodded.
"There are better places to take a nap than on the ground, you know," Chrom started, and the man looked over to him as he put his hand out, "here, take my hand." The white haired man hesitated at first, then obliged and gave Chrom his hand –which had a tattoo like marking with six eyes that would sear into one's soul. But he disregarded it. Chrom then tugged him up causing him to stumble a bit and nearly fall over. "You alright?" He asks sincerely.
"Yes," the man stuttered, trying to find the words to speak. "Thank you, Chrom…" He then gave a look of confusion.
"Ah, then you know who I am?" Chrom asked him, while raising a brow.
"No, actually. I…" He paused. How did he know Chrom's name? "Your name… It just came to me."
He hummed to himself in thought, "how curious. Tell me, what's your name? What brings you here?"
"My name is…" The man paused, with a furrowed brow he sighed in frustration, "it's… I apologize I can't seem to… Remember…"
"Oh? You don't know your own name?" He asked in disbelief.
"I'm not sure if…" He cut himself off abruptly and turned to look around, "I'm sorry, but where am I exactly?"
Lissa then piped in excitedly, "hey I've heard of this! It's called amnesia!"
"*It's called a load of Pegasus dung*," Frederick interrupted, "we are to believe you know Milord's name, but not your own?"
The man felt attacked, here he was, not even knowing his own name and this man won't believe him? "B-but I speak the truth!" He stuttered out.
Chrom then cut in, seeing the amnesiac with a distraught face, "but what if it is true, Frederick? We can't just leave him here, alone and confused. What kind of Shepherds would we be then?"
"Just the same, Milord. I must emphasize caution. 'Twould not do to let a wolf into our flock." He bowed slightly.
Chrom regarded his friend's words and nodded, "right then –we'll take him back to town and sort it all out there."
"Wait just one moment," the man interjected. "Do I not have a say in this?"
Chrom chuckled slightly, "peace, friend –I promise we'll hear all you have to say back in town." And with that Chrom turned his heels and started to walk forward, the others followed close behind.

As they walked, the man then stopped, "what will you do with me? Am I to be your prisoner?"
Chrom halted and turned to look at him, then let out a laugh. "Worry not! You'll be free to go once we establish you're no threat to Ylisse."
"Ylisse? Is that where we are?" He furrowed his brow in confusion.
"Ha!" Frederick cried out, "surely you jest! You've never heard of the halidom? Someone pay this actor! The furrowed brow is *especially* convincing…"
Chrom sighed and shook his head, frowning at Frederick, "Frederick, please." He then turned to the cloaked man, "this is the Halidom of Ylisse. Our ruler, Emmeryn, is called the Exalt. I suppose proper introductions are in order. My name is Chrom –but then, you already knew that. The delicate one here is Lissa," he said gesturing to Lissa.
"I am *not* delicate!" She protested, "ignore my brother, please. He can be a bit thick sometimes. But you're lucky the Shepherds found you! Brigands would have been a rude awakening!"
The man raised a brow, "Shepherds? You tend sheep?" He then looked at Frederick, "in full armor?"
Chrom smiled and breathed out a short laugh, "you'd be surprised how dangerous it is. Just ask Frederick the Wary, here."
"A title I wear with pride. Gods forbid one of us keeps an appropriate level of caution. I have every wish to trust you, stranger, but my station dictates otherwise."
The man nodded, "I understand. I would do no less myself. My name is Robin." He caught himself by surprise, then spoke up to clarify, "I just remembered that. How odd. Well I suppose that's one mystery solved."
"Robin?" Chrom started, "is that foreign? Ah well, we can discuss it later. We're almost to town anyhow. Once we-"
He gets cut off by Lissa when she slaps his arm and points at the village that is set aflame. "Chrom, look! The town!"
Chrom looks at the town, "dammit! The town is ablaze! Those blasted brigands, no doubt… Frederick! Lissa! Quickly!" Chrom called out as he started to run.

"What about him?" Frederick said, pointing to Robin.
"Unless he's on fire too, it can wait!" He called out.
"Aptly put, Milord," Frederick nodded and mounted the horse he had been pulling along with him.
"Let's go already!" Lissa yelled frantically as she ran ahead.
"But what about-!" Robin started, but they were too far off to hear him. He hummed to himself in thought, looking behind him, then before him. He sighed, "to hell with it." And with that he chased after them.

Chapter 4: Chapter 4: Tattoos

Robin awoke to the sound of birds and horses. He lifted up his right hand and looked at the mark on the back of it. *Where did you come from?* He thought to himself as he looked on. The six eyes on it seared into his soul that made his blood seethe. He was brought out of his thoughts once he heard the sound of a horn. He got up quickly and put on his gloves and shoes. Upon hearing the horn blow twice more, he urgently ran out of his tent.

"Robin!" Chrom called out over the crowd of people rushing about.

"What's wrong?" He yelled back.

"I need you to think up a strategy as quickly as you can! A unit of Risen are approaching!"

Robin took Chrom's word and mulled over what to do, "Sumia, Cordelia, Cherche! I need you to scout ahead so I know what we're dealing with! Gaius, Frederick, Lon'qu! Go with them!" The six that he called to mounted on their rides and flew off.

"Chrom! Take the Eijenhar card of Prince Marth, diamond formation! Lissa, Henry! You two will take our flank! Owain, Gerome! I need you two to be in the front, you're both our strongest," they all nodded and scrambled to prepare for the upcoming battle.

"I'm going with you," Lucina insisted as she walked to his side, tightening the straps on her armor.

"I-" she wasn't going to take no for an answer, and he knew that, "alright. Let's go."

By the time the flyers returned, they could already see the Risen approaching.

"It's a group of Revenants and a few Entombed. They seem to be weak. There are also a few archers we had to out maneuver." Cordelia said as she landed her Pegasus next to Robin.

He nodded in response, "thank you. You'll have to sit this one out, I don't want the archers to get any of you."

The mindless beasts were simple to take care of initially, it was the number of them that was intimidating. One by one they were being cut down, the purple ooze from the creatures would splatter onto the ground with each strike. Everything was happening so fast that the others didn't have time to think, just act. Robin looked around his allies and found that the diamond formation was splitting, and that Lucina was gone. He looked around anxiously, expecting to find her severely wounded, but pushed that thought from his mind. She was skilled enough to hold her own against these kinds of Risen.

He then spotted her, she was chasing after two cowardly Risen that had fallen back from the others. Quickly scanning the larger one he could tell it was the Chief. "Chrom! I'm going to go help Lucina! Can you hold your own?" He called out to Chrom.

After cutting down an archer Chrom looked to his Tactician, "we'll keep them from your path so you can get to her!"

Robin took the advantage and started to run.

Once Lucina was in range, he saw her fending off the Chief Risen and one Entombed. Glancing over the two Risen he could tell that she was outmatched, wherever these Risen had come from they were more powerful than the rest. On a whim he had decided to rush to her side and aid her. As she blocked an attack from the chief, Robin struck it with lightning magic.

"It's not wise to go off on your own." He said in a concerned tone, blocking one of its talons.

With one swift movement, she ended the Chief's struggle. It keeled over and disappeared into a hazy smoke. She sheathed Falchion, "I appreciate the concern, Robin. But I have dealt with Risen for far longer than you. I can take them on my own."

"You're right. However keep in mind you're in an army now, you don't have to do it alone. We'll always be there for-" he cut himself off once he saw the leftover Entombed approach her from behind. "Lucina look out!" He lunged at her, knocking her down and out of the way of its claws.

The Risen struck Robin's back and he cried out in pain, pushing himself up, he grabbed a more powerful tome and killed it. He felt some blood trickle down his back, it had scratched his back and left a deep gash. However, he elected to ignore the pain for the time being.

He sighed in relief once the conflict was actually over, then turned to help Lucina up. "Are you okay?"

Lucina nodded, "those were the last two. We should head back to camp."

He nodded in agreement, and brushed himself off. He could take care of his wounds later.

They walked in silence, Robin was thinking on what to say but found that he didn't have anything to converse about with her. His tactics on the battlefield were genius, but when it came to conversations: he was left baffled on how to approach one.

After a pregnant pause, Lucina looked to Robin, "thank you."

He looked at her in question, "oh?"

"For saving me from the Entombed. I…" She didn't say anything afterwards and looked ahead.

"It's no problem, really. That's what friends do." He gave her a smile of reassurance. She simply nodded in response.

Once back at the camp, Robin had started his rounds to check on the convoy. He wrote down what weapons were starting to wear and what they had needed. Laurent made it clear that they were running short on tomes the past day, so he made note to get some in the next town they would pass through.

Everything else seemed to be fine though. So he had decided to retire for the night, perhaps after a few… Hours of reading. Now that he thought about it, he was starting to feel lightheaded and dizzy. His vision started to become unfocused and everything appeared blurry. He held onto a tree to balance himself. When he started to remove his coat, he heard some branches break behind him. He spun around and saw Lucina. "Lucina? What are you doing here?"

"I followed you, actually. I had some questions, concerning your tactics. But it seems you're busy, so I'll just leave."

"Actually, no, I'm not busy. I'm free to answer any questions you have." He shook his head to try and keep conscious. He smiled a false smile in hopes to cover up, but it contorted into a look of pain once he leaned against the tree. *That was a poor choice.* Quickly getting off of the tree, he turned his neck to try and see the wound. However, there was no success.

"Here, let me see the wound. I have had plenty experience tending wounds caused by Risen." Lucina offered as she started to approach.

Robin nodded, he normally would deny help and say that he was fine, but he clearly wasn't. He turned his back to her, "I'm going to have to take off my shirt." He then stripped off the layers upon layers of clothing save for his pants and gloves. When he had pulled the final shirt over, it revealed a tattoo covering his whole back. Designs of circles similar to those who would use tomes were etched in purple, within the center, there was Plegian writing, six wings spanning to his shoulders and beyond his waist… But the one thing that caused Lucina to stumble back was the six piercing eyes that were the only other part of the tattoo that weren't purple. They were red.

She took another step back, recalling the voice that mocked her and taunted her, the massive body that moved from continent to continent only to destroy.

"Lucina?" Robin's voice brought her back to reality.

"Where did you get those tattoos?" She whispered, her eyes wide in horror.

He furrowed his brows in confusion, "tattoos? Where? I know I have one on my hand…"

"You have tattoos on your back…" *Did he really not know he had tattoos? By the gods, how could one miss something as large as that plastered on their body?*

"I do? Hm… I don't recall getting any." He tried turning his head to see, but cringed when doing so.

Lucina saw him cringe and snapped out of her trance, "right, sorry." She took out a vulnerary and put the gel upon the tips of her fingers, "it's going to sting," she warned him. He nodded, fully aware of that fact. Once he felt the coldness of the gel touch his wounds, he held his breath to try and suppress the initial shock. Sting was an understatement.

She had started to pluck some pieces of bark from it, then rubbed in the vulnerary and it started to work its magic. However, the deepness of the cuts would prove the medicine to work as a pain reliever. "It looks like it started to become infected. You should have taken care of it as soon as we returned to camp. You'll have to get it properly bandaged if you

want to heal. As well as keep it from getting infected again."

Robin sighed in relief once the pain of the wound started to disappear, "I will. Thank you, Lucina."

She shook her head, "no need to thank me, though my thanks are in order; you did save my life."

"Ah. You're welcome," He then reached to grab his clothing; he was starting to feel indecent. At least Lucina didn't seem to have any trouble or even be embarrassed as she applied the medicine. Then again, she must have been used to it. He could not even begin to imagine what her future was like.

"I'll go fetch a healer for you so you may be relieved more quickly," she said hurriedly.

"Wait! Lucina you don't…" His voice trailed off, as she was already gone, "have to… Ah well, what could one healer hurt?" He then thought it over and found it more ideal to leave his shirt off for the time being, so then the vulnerary may have a chance to dry. As well as the fact that they are all ripped anyway. He'll have to ask Cherche to stitch it… Again.

Lucina came back with Libra in trail, "Let me see the wound." Libra said, passing Lucina and approaching Robin. He nodded and turned around.

"Oh, dear Naga," he gasped in horror.

"Is it *that* bad?" Now Robin was concerned.

"Oh, Naga forgive me." It was a blur then, something jabbed him hard in the already wounded area, causing him great shock and pain. He toppled over on the ground and his ears were ringing. Lucina was yelling at Libra… At least, he thought…

There was a scuffle of footwork and then, nothing.

He got picked up, and was being carried by someone slim. *Lucina perhaps?* He couldn't tell. The person said something to him before he blacked out.

Robin awoke with a start. A nightmare he had during his time being passed out lingered in his mind for only a few mere seconds before he forgot what it was. His heart was pounding against his chest and his cheeks were wet with tears. He moved to try and sit up, but regretted it immediately afterwards as he felt the pain shoot up his spine.

"Lay back down, Robin," Came a voice.

He complied and lay down on his stomach. He looked over, and opened his eyes, "Lissa?"

"You had a pretty nasty run in with a Risen. Your skin may be healed but your nerves are still repairing" She replied calmly. She was on her knees, with a wet rag in hand and a concerned look on her face. She then soaked it once more in an elixir and put it on his back gently.

"Nng… I remember. Lucina was there and she went to go get Libra… But then… what happened? How did I end up here?" He lifted his head to look around and found that he was in his own tent.

"Libra hit your wound which caused you to black out. Lucina brought you back to camp, she wouldn't leave your side until I could confirm you were okay… Libra's under constant watch for now. You don't need to worry."

Robin mulled over what Lissa had said, *why would Libra do that?* He went to try and sit up again but Lissa forced him to lay back down, "you're in no shape to get up."

"But-" he started but Lissa cut him off.

"No buts! Cleric's orders!"

He sighed and lied back down. "Now you better not be putting any frogs on my back," he said with a wry smile playing at his lips.

Lissa scoffed, "maybe *now* I will!"

He laughed silently and closed his eyes once more.

"The poor girl thinks it's her fault." She said abruptly.

Robin turned his head to look at Lissa, "who?"

"Lucina."

"Well, if you have the chance, tell her that it wasn't her fault. No one would have been able to guess that Libra would do that. It's still beyond me as to why he did…"

"Oh! You can tell her yourself! She's standing guard outside right now, actually. I guess she made it her duty to protect you to make up for it or something." She stood from the ground and walked out of his tent.

He heard Lissa talking outside and a voice replying; Lucina's voice. Lucina pulled the tent flap back so she could enter. She looked stressed and tired, *how long was I out for?* Once she saw him move to try and sit up relief filled her body. "Thank the gods you're okay."

"If not for you, then I wouldn't be. So thank you, Lucina. I should have gotten the wound checked out earlier."

"You don't need to thank me. I was the one who got you into that mess in the first place." She started to approach but decided to keep her distance.

"Eh? It wasn't your fault; if anything, it strengthened our bonds." No, that had not come out the way I intended it to.

"Ah… Yes… I should probably… go now… so you can recover." And with that, she left.

You didn't have to leave so soon, Robin thought to himself.

Soon after, Lissa barged back in and asked how her "favorite patient" was doing, which interrupted his disappointed thoughts. He just sighed in reply.

"I know that sigh."

"Hm?" He raised a questioning brow.

She grinned, "I used to sigh like that all the time before I got married!"

He blinked once. Twice. "I'm sorry you lost me…"

"You're in love aren't you?" How cute! Her best friend was in love! She could clearly tell who it was, but she wanted to watch him squirm. "Who's the lucky one?"

"I'm… Not in love? Not one bit! I haven't the slightest clue as to where you got that idea." His thoughts went back to Lucina, and the long talks they had during the night when the camp was silent. She would oft-vent to him about the future, what horrors she had seen. He had listened, and comforted her by telling her that she wasn't by herself.

"And there's the forlorn expression you get when you think of that person!" Lissa yelled out in excitement.

Oh gods, she was right.

Eventually, he spilled the beans, "I tried not to! But here I am, a lovesick fool. I'm Chrom's chief tactician; I don't have time for love and relationships. What do I do, Lissa?" He turned to his side.

"Well first, you tell me who it is."

"A certain blue-haired royal-"

"What? *Chrom?* Robin, I know you two are close but that's…"

He let out a hearty laugh, "oh gods no! He's a married man! Though I would be lying if I said that I haven't thought about it!" He was going to say more, but couldn't for a burst of laughter erupted from his mouth. He was only teasing with the last part. Well… only partially.

"Robin! Come on! Tell me already!" Lissa was getting antsy.

"Er… Right, yes," he cleared his throat, "it's hrmphmrmr." He mumbled the last part.

"What was that? I couldn't hear you!"

Another grumble was the response. Lissa frowned visibly, "don't make me get that frog!"

"Alright! It's… It's Lucina." He sighed in defeat and rolled back onto his stomach, his face hidden in his pillow. He had hoped to hide the obvious blush on his face.

Lissa just stared in silence at him, then, ever so slowly did a mischievous grin form on her face.

His face was still buried in his pillow, he had never felt more ashamed in his life. Lucina was his best friend's daughter from the future. Not to mention she was of royal blood, one of Naga's chosen. It would never work out. "I wouldn't say that it's love… It may be one of those fleeting affections, or me just being selfish with the attention." He was in denial, and this he knew.

She let out a snort; then a fully-fledged laugh. Robin looked over to his friend in confusion. "What? What's so funny?"

"You can't be serious about that! I've seen you two interact! You're head over heels for her! This is too funny! Our great tactician in love with my niece from the future!"

"What do I do, Lissa?" He sighed.

She stopped laughing, wiped the tears away from her eyes, and then looked to him. "That's up to you, my friend. I need to go tell the others about this now."

"Others? … Lissa no, don't you *dare*." But it was too late for that; she had gone out of the tent. He groaned and sat up. He was going to get up whether Lissa wanted him to or not. After all, he did have work to attend to.

Reaching for his shirt he found it wasn't where he would normally have it. Ah. That's right. It's ripped; hopefully, Cherche is currently fixing the three big holes in all three layers of clothing.

I really should get more pairs of shirts. Ah well, that will have to wait.

He then sat at his desk and lit a candle so that he could see what he was doing.

However, he couldn't focus all too well, as his thoughts would linger on Lucina. *Dammit,* he really was in love.